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SUBJECT: Goma Report October 10: North Kivu Calm;
FARDC-FPJC Combat Provokes Panic in Bunia; EU
Envoy Downbeat Following Meeting With Nkunda

REF: Kinshasa 868

¶1. (SBU) Summary: North Kivu was generally calm October 10, but fighting between FARDC and the Popular Front for Justice in Congo (FPJC-Front Populaire pour la Justice au Congo) in Ituri provoked momentary fear of an FPJC attack on Bunia. Demonstrations against MONUC continued in Kisangani, but on a much smaller scale than the previous day. EU Great Lakes envoy Roeland Van de Geer said he was not optimistic following his October 9 meeting with Laurent Nkunda. Nkunda was aggressive and adamant that the CNDP no longer participate in the Amani Process. Nkunda told Van de Geer that the October 9 BBC interview in which he called for the DRC's "liberation," had been misinterpreted. Van de Geer warned that unless a political solution to the conflict is found in the coming weeks the situation on the ground will deteriorate further. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) North Kivu remained calm, but in Ituri, Radio Okapi reported gunfire exchanges between FARDC and the Popular Front for Justice in Congo (FPJC-Front Populaire pour la Justice au Congo) at Lengabo, approximately 10 kilometers south of Bunia during the early afternoon of October 10. According to a FARDC officer, the FPJC attacked Lengabo, stealing cattle and setting a vehicle on fire before retreating into the jungle. An FPJC spokesman claimed that FARDC had provoked the firefight.

¶3. (SBU) The Lengabo fighting sent momentary panic through Bunia, with markets, schools, and stores closing. By late afternoon, calm had returned to Bunia. MONUC announced it had reinforced its positions around Bunia.

¶4. (SBU) Demonstrations against MONUC continued for a second day in Kisangani (reftel), but on a much smaller scale.

¶5. (SBU) Certain Mai-Mai forces in South Kivu are reportedly calling for mobilization against Laurent Nkunda.

¶6. (SBU) EU Great Lakes Envoy Roeland Van der Geer briefed the diplomatic corps resident in Goma on his October 9 meeting with Nkunda. He described the meeting as "open, frank, and emotional" on a wide range of issues, including the DRC's macro-economic situation. Nkunda criticized the GDRC for "selling out" the country to the IMF and Chinese interests.

¶7. (SBU) According to Van der Geer, Nkunda said that there had been misunderstanding and misinterpretation about his BBC interview in which he called for a liberation movement in the DRC. While the CNDP would no longer participate in the Amani Process, Nkunda told Van de Geer that it would accept the January 2008 Goma Accord. Nkunda again called for a new framework for CNDP/GDRC negotiations, suggesting that the International Facilitation should become the International Mediation. He also condemned FARDC/FDLR collaboration.

18. (SBU) Van de Geer said that his meeting with Nkunda had proved optimistic. Nkunda appeared tired and was very aggressive. In Van de Geer's view, a political solution must be found in the coming weeks to avoid a further deterioration on the ground. FARDC's General Lukama, however, noted that the fact that Nkunda was finally meeting with facilitators again was in itself positive.

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